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CURRENCY

Fears of Global Economic Slowdown Dominate IMF Annual Meeting

The protracted global financial crisis dominated the agenda at last week's International Monetary Fund (IMF) Annual Meeting in Tokyo, Japan, as new data showed that economic growth is likely to be even lower than anticipated this year and next. As officials debated how best to boost growth while addressing macroeconomic imbalances, the controversial topic of rich countries using further quantitative easing to boost their job markets – a practice slammed by many emerging economies as putting their own exchange rates and trade at risk – featured prominently during the high-level discussions.

Ahead of the Tokyo meetings, the IMF released more pessimistic economic and trade growth [forecasts](#) for 2012 and 2013 than it had projected in July. Economic growth is now slated to reach 3.3 percent this year, down from the earlier estimate of 3.5. Next year, output is expected to expand by 3.6 percent, down from the previous prediction of 3.9 percent.

"The crisis in the euro area remains the most obvious threat to the global outlook," the IMF cautioned in releasing the estimates. "Despite recent improvements, global imbalances and the associated vulnerabilities are likely to remain well above desirable levels unless governments take additional, decisive action," the Fund warned, adding that "no significant improvement appears in the offing."

In light of these stark predictions, the IMF's International Monetary and Financial Committee (IMFC) – which is made up of the organisation's governors, specifically finance ministers and central bank governors of member countries – stressed that policies regarding jobs and growth, repairing financial systems, and reducing global imbalances "are key priorities."

"We are committed to strengthening domestic sources of growth in surplus economies, boosting national savings while enhancing export competitiveness in deficit countries, and fostering greater exchange rate flexibility, where appropriate," the IMFC said in its final [communiqué](#). "We reaffirm our commitment to avoid any form of trade and investment protectionism."

However, observers note, there is a growing concern among policymakers that the positive effects of additional monetary policy are becoming less apparent and that



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other, more difficult, fiscal consolidation and structural reforms are needed, particularly in the eurozone.

Exchange rate issue sparks debate

Recently, a new IMF pilot [report](#) indicated that various exchange rates are either under- or overvalued compared to what would be considered desirable policies and fundamentals, risking additional imbalances that could cause increased vulnerability.

While current accounts are believed to be too strong and real exchange rates undervalued in China, Germany, Indonesia, Malaysia, the Netherlands, Singapore, South Korea, Sweden, and Thailand, these imbalances "are fully offset," the IMF said, given that current accounts are too weak and real effective exchange rates overvalued in Australia, Brazil, Canada, Japan, Turkey, Russia, South Africa, United States, the United Kingdom, and, within the Euro area, Spain, Italy, and France.

Against this background, various emerging market members of the IMFC argued that new rounds of quantitative easing, such as the ones enacted by the US Federal Reserve, Bank of Japan, and European Central Bank last month, would adversely affect their economies.

While some urged caution and pushed for a greater balance between using monetary and fiscal measures, others took a harsher tone, stressing their readiness to enact their own policies to defend their trade balances and exchange rates if necessary.

Brazilian Finance Minister Guido Mantega, whose warnings of a global "currency war" when the US introduced its second round of quantitative easing in 2010 made international headlines, cautioned on Saturday that rich countries' "lax" monetary policies have also proven less than effective, and that they would instead prompt depreciations in developed economy exchange rates and result in export increases.

"Advanced countries cannot count on exporting their way out of the crisis at the expense of emerging market economies," the Brazilian official said. Adding that "currency wars" will only worsen the global economic crisis, he argued that "trying to grasp a larger share of global demand through artificial means has many side effects."

"Brazil, for one, will take whatever measures it deems necessary to avoid the detrimental effects of these spillovers," Mantega said, ostensibly speaking in defence of Brasilia's recent decision to temporarily raise import tariffs on various goods. "We cannot accept the attempt to unfairly label as 'protectionist' legitimate measures of defence in the areas of foreign trade, exchange rate, and capital account management."

Yi Gang, the Deputy Governor of the People's Bank of China, similarly [questioned](#) whether these new rounds of quantitative easing would have their intended effects.

"While the announcements of further unconventional monetary policy measures by major advanced economies seemed to have lifted market sentiment somewhat, it remains to be seen whether these measures could support growth and employment as they intended to," Yi said. The Chinese official added that earlier rounds of "unconventional operations" have shown diminishing returns, fuelling concerns about the "collateral consequences" of such policies.

Bernanke defends US policies

Speaking at an event hosted by the Bank of Japan and the IMF on the sidelines of the Fund's meeting the following day, Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke defended the US' decision to pursue its latest round of quantitative easing, including the measure's "explicit conditioning on improvements in labour market conditions," as a way to ease

financial conditions and instil greater public confidence, while acknowledging that “monetary policy is not a panacea.”

Under the Federal Reserve policy announced in September – nicknamed QE3 – the US will buy an additional US\$40 billion per month in mortgage-backed securities, along with the current US\$45 billion a month it buys via other asset purchase programmes. The policy is set to continue until the US job market sees substantial improvements.

Responding to concerns raised by many emerging economies following the QE3 announcement, Bernanke questioned whether advanced economy monetary policy indeed has the negative “spillover effects” that US trading partners have raised.

“I am sympathetic to the challenges faced by many economies in a world of volatile international capital flows,” he said. “I would argue, though, that it is not at all clear that accommodative policies in advanced economies impose net costs on emerging market economies,” adding that recent research did not support the view that these rich country policies are the “dominant factor” behind emerging market capital flows. Bernanke also noted that measures that support the recovery in advanced economies are also likely to boost trade and growth in emerging markets.

The IMF meetings, which came to a close on Sunday, are held concurrently with the World Bank Group Annual Meetings. The next major meeting of the IMFC will be the Spring Meetings, which will be held in Washington next April. Officials will then review progress made in addressing the global financial crisis and discuss any additional policy measures that might be needed at that point.

ICTSD reporting.

WASHINGTON

Obama, Romney Intensify Sparring Over Trade as US Election Enters Final Weeks

With the US presidential election just weeks away and recent polls showing a near dead-heat between President Barack Obama and Republican challenger Mitt Romney, the two candidates have been sharpening their rhetoric as part of their efforts to win over voters before the polls open on 6 November. Trade has lately been a regular sticking point between the two presidential contenders, as they continue to spar over who will best use it to promote growth and jobs as the US economy continues its sluggish recovery.

Arguments over trade gain momentum, while showing little substantive change

In their party platforms released in August, the two sides’ planned approaches to trade, should they win the upcoming term, showed few differences. (See Bridges Weekly, [12 September 2012](#)) Both indicated support for initiatives such as the proposed Trans-Pacific Partnership (TPP) Agreement, stressed that allegedly unfair Chinese trade practices should be stopped, and expressed interest in expanding trade in the Americas. Since then, candidates have attempted to focus on perceived differences in their proposed trade agendas, particularly in swing states that rely heavily on manufacturing.

The trade-related rhetoric over the last two weeks, though more frequent, largely echoes earlier statements made by both sides. However, foreign policy generally has been deemed to be one of Romney's weak areas, a topic where the Republican presidential candidate has lately tried to clarify his positions during the few remaining days before the polls open.

Earlier this month, Romney criticised Obama for allegedly having "no trade agenda to speak of" and [arguing](#) that the US President "has not signed one new free trade agreement in the past four years" – claims that the President's campaign officials and fellow Democrats have lambasted in response.

"[Romney]'s basing it on an absurd premise that [former] President [George W.] Bush signed a couple of trade agreements, but the fact remains that the president renegotiated the trade agreements – made them better for American workers, made them better for the American auto industry and the American meat industry – and that's why we not only got them through Congress, but the president actually signed them into law," Jen Psaki, a spokeswoman for the Obama campaign, [told](#) reporters in response to the Republican candidate's claims.

The agreements in question – with Colombia, Panama, and South Korea, were indeed signed by then-President Bush; however, following disagreements with the above-mentioned industries, the Korea deal was ultimately renegotiated under Obama. (See Bridges Weekly, [9 December 2010](#)) The three deals were ratified by the US Congress and signed into law by Obama last year, following intense political wrangling among the two major US political parties that threatened to stall the process further.

During yesterday's presidential [debate](#) – the second of three – Obama stressed not only the passage of the three trade deals during his first term, but also the White House's efforts to increase the enforcement of fair trading practices by foreign competitors and the progress being made to increase US exports abroad.

"The way we're going to create jobs here is not just to change our tax code but also to double our exports. And we are on pace to double our exports, one of the commitments I made when I was president," Obama said, referring to a pledge made in his 2010 State of the Union address to double US exports from their 2009 levels of US\$1.57 trillion to US\$3.14 trillion by 2015. "That's creating tens of thousands of jobs all across the country. That's why we've kept on pushing trade deals, but trade deals that make sure that American workers and American businesses are getting a good deal."

Romney similarly promised during yesterday's debate that his administration would conclude more trade deals, should he win the November election, while stressing that Obama's policies are at fault for the US' continued high unemployment levels. In his remarks regarding economic policy, he also attempted to distinguish himself from the administration of the last Republican president, George W. Bush – Obama's predecessor.

"I'll crack down on China. President Bush didn't," Romney said. "I'm also going to dramatically expand trade in Latin America. It's been growing about 12 percent per year over a long period of time. I want to add more free trade agreements so we have more trade."

Candidates repeat criticisms of China currency, trade policies

The recurring complaints over China's valuation of its currency have also intensified over the past couple of weeks, with Romney repeating earlier pledges to name the Asian economic powerhouse a currency manipulator on his first day as president, should he win office.

Critics of Beijing's strict control of the renminbi argue that the currency is undervalued, making Chinese exports more attractive than their foreign competitors'. Beijing has argued that its currency has been appreciating since July 2005, and is now approaching equilibrium.

"China has been a currency manipulator for years and years and years," the Republican candidate said at Tuesday's presidential debate. "And the president has a regular opportunity to — to label them as a — as a currency manipulator but refuses to do so. On day one, I will label China a currency manipulator, which will allow me as president to be able to put in place, if necessary, tariffs where I believe that they are taking unfair advantage of our manufacturers."

Romney's charge was promptly countered by Obama, who has argued that he has – both publicly and privately – put strong pressure on Beijing to alter its currency policies.

"As far as currency manipulation, the currency's actually gone up 11 percent since I've been president because we have pushed them hard," Obama argued yesterday. "And we've put unprecedented trade pressure on China. That's why exports have significantly increased under my presidency. That's going to help to create jobs here."

The US Treasury Department recently [delayed](#) its semi-annual report on the foreign exchange practices of US trading partners – including China – into November, following the meeting of finance ministers of the Group of 20 leading economies. The delay has been lambasted by the Romney campaign, which has attributed it as part of the Obama administration's insufficiently strict response to Chinese policies. However, the report – often a politically sensitive document – is often delayed, with the last three all being issued later than their original release dates.

ICTSD reporting; "Romney Hits Obama on Trade Deals Relying on Narrow Distinction," BLOOMBERG BUSINESSWEEK, 9 October 2012; "Romney says Obama has no 'trade agenda to speak of'," THE HILL, 8 October 2012; "UPDATE 2-US Treasury delays China currency report into November," REUTERS, 12 October 2012.

DISPUTES

Mexico Challenges China over Subsidies for Clothing, Textiles

China is being called on to defend its support of clothing and textile manufacturers, after Mexico City filed a complaint with the WTO on Monday accusing Beijing of unfairly subsidising its domestic industry. Citing a number of alleged government support measures, the Mexican complaint adds to the list of a growing number of challenges by some of China's trading partners – in particular, the US – over what they claim is an unfair use of subsidies.

The move comes as Mexico seeks to reduce its trade deficit with China and to consolidate its position as a credible competitor to the Asian economic powerhouse in its role as a key manufacturing exporter to the US.

Although details of the complaint had not been published as Bridges went to press, Mexico's Secretary of the Economy outlined in its [statement](#) a wide-ranging series of measures that are now being challenged.

"Some of the ways in which the government of the Republic of China benefits its producers are with tax exemptions or reductions, mainly from income tax; the provision of goods and services that are not general infrastructure, such as land, electricity; and raw materials such as cotton and polyester under preferential terms, as well as the direct transfer of funds in grants and debt forgiveness," the statement read.

Longstanding tensions in competition for US market

Trade between the two countries has increased more than ten-fold between 2000 and 2011, according to official Chinese figures, with Mexico representing China's second largest trading partner in Latin America behind Brazil. It is, however, the two countries' evolving roles as competitors for a share in the US import market which have come to characterise their relationship in recent years.

Protecting its ability to fairly compete for trade with other countries is central to the complaint, clarified the Mexican statement announcing the move. "The Government of Mexico reiterates its commitment to fight any practice that improperly puts our products at a disadvantage compared with other products in a third country market," the government said.

The spat comes as China and Mexico have in recent months been looking to improve relations following the tension which came to characterise their competition for the US market.

In April, it was reported that the two countries had entered into a cooperation agreement aimed at promoting a fairer balance of trade and ending what the Mexican government described as "unfair Chinese practices" in shoemaking. In December 2011, a series of trade agreements were concluded between Mexico City and Beijing, in part to protect Mexico from cheap Chinese imports.

This is the fourth time that Mexico has lodged a trade complaint against China, with two of its previous challenges also concerning tax breaks and other subsidies which Mexico accused China of unlawfully providing to its manufacturers.

Mexico and China will now have 60 days for consultations to reach settlement of the dispute. If unsuccessful, Mexico will then be able to request the establishment of a WTO dispute panel to consider the case.

ICTSD reporting; "Mexico challenges Chinese textile, clothing support," REUTERS, 15 October 2012; "Made in Mexico: China's Unlikely Challenger," THE GLOBE AND MAIL, 29 September 2012; "Mexico hails "new relationship" with China over trade," REUTERS, 20 April 2012.

PREFERENTIAL AGREEMENTS

China, Japan Island Dispute Sparks Trade Concerns in Seoul

The simmering diplomatic row between Beijing and Tokyo over a group of contested islands has prompted questions over what the high-profile dispute could mean for proposed trade talks between Asia's two largest economies and South Korea, as well as for regional trade overall, Seoul officials said this past week.

Following the announcement in May of their plan to open formal trade negotiations, Seoul, Tokyo, and Beijing agreed to begin the talks by the end of this year (See Bridges Weekly, [16 May 2012](#)). However, that deadline has been lately called into question, with many left wondering whether two of the three parties will even make it as far as the negotiating table.

The tensions between China and Japan stem from a territorial dispute over a series of islands in the East China Sea, an area to which both countries have laid claim. Apart from their symbolic significance to both parties, the islands – known as the Diaoyu in China and Senkaku in Japan – and their surrounding waters are also said to be rich in natural gas deposits.

The feud, which has intensified rapidly over the past month, reached new heights last Wednesday when top Chinese finance officials pulled out of attending last week's International Monetary Fund and World Bank Group's Annual Meetings, which were being hosted by Tokyo. Though reports have since emerged of secret meetings between country diplomats trying to quell the dispute, when and how the disagreement will be resolved remains unclear, as well as what the broader trade implications could be.

Higher-level discussions regarding the proposed trilateral FTA are scheduled to begin in Cambodia next month. With that date in mind, Seoul is therefore asking its partners to put aside their disagreements if they begin to threaten the future of the trade talks.

"We look forward to, and hope that, during the East Asia Summit meeting [in November], there could be an announcement to kick-start the negotiations," South Korean minister of strategy and finance Bahk Jae-Wan said, urging that territorial and economic issues be dealt with separately.

Despite their disagreements, Chinese and Japanese officials have made clear that the proposed free trade agreement could have major benefits for both economies. Regardless

of his insistence that his country will not cede sovereignty of the disputed territory, Japanese Prime Minister Yoshihiko Noda has acknowledged the value of eliminating trade barriers with Asia's most powerful economy.

"China is simply a huge market ... that's all there is to it," Noda said. In the last decade alone, trade between the two nations has tripled, reaching more than US\$340 billion. Similarly, Chen Yulu – an adviser to China's central bank – has conceded that terminating the process would amount to a "big loss for Asia."

In the event that the three-way trade pact is finalised, South Korea stands to increase its GDP by a possible 3.1 percent. China's and Japan's could each rise 2.9 percent and 0.5 percent respectively, according to Chinese state-run news agency Xinhua.

Tokyo-Beijing fallout could have regional trade implications, officials warn

While the fallout has actually produced short term benefits for South Korean automobile manufacturers, who have seen an increase in their exports to China, South Korean Trade Minister Bark Tae Ho has cautioned that his country will not benefit in the long run should the row continue.

"[The disagreement] will hurt trilateral economic cooperation because invisibly we are all connected," he told the Wall Street Journal last week. With each of the three countries having a major trade relationship with the other, these ties could suffer if the row remains unresolved, Bark warned.

Some trade analysts have suggested that the imbalance in Sino-Japanese trade relations would leave Tokyo worse off should the dispute continue to escalate. According to Chinese customs data, in 2011 China was the largest market for Japanese exports, while Japan was China's fourth largest.

Some observers note that these predicted effects are beginning to surface. Japanese car exports to China have suffered since the dispute began and, according to JPMorgan Chase projections, could decrease by up to 70 percent in the final quarter of this year.

ICTSD reporting: "China-Japan Tensions Concern South Korea," WALL STREET JOURNAL, 11 October 2012; "China official says spat with Japan derails free trade talks," REUTERS, 27 September 2012; "China and Japan Say They Held Talks About Island Dispute That Has Frayed Relations," NEW YORK TIMES, 12 October 2012; "China-Japan Islands Dispute Clouds \$340 Billion Trade Ties," BLOOMBERG, 18 September 2012; "INTERVIEW: South Korean Fin Min Still Hopeful for Trade Pact with Japan and China Despite Tensions," WALL STREET JOURNAL, 13 October 2012; "China consumers spurn Japan cars amid islands row," ASSOCIATED PRESS, 9 October 2012.

PREFERENTIAL AGREEMENTS

European Parliament Ctte Gives Go Ahead to Japan Trade Talks

Efforts toward formally launching EU-Japan trade talks ramped up last week, after the European Parliament's international trade committee [voted](#) in favour of the negotiations. The proposal is next set to go to the full Parliament later this month.

"The EU's trade policy needs a game-changer: a free trade agreement with Japan," Metin Kazak, the Member of the European Parliament (MEP) acting as rapporteur in the committee, said on Thursday following the vote. The non-binding resolution passed on Thursday, with 23 votes in favour, two against, and two abstentions.

The move comes less than three months after the European Commission requested approval from the bloc's 27 member states to launch negotiations with Tokyo. EU leaders have repeatedly called for more bilateral deals as a way to boost economic recovery in the struggling eurozone, particularly given the impasse in the WTO's Doha Round of trade talks.

Speaking about the possibility of an EU-Japan deal in July, EU Trade Commissioner Karel de Gucht warned that "if growth in the next 20 years is likely to come from Asia, then overlooking Japan would be a serious mistake in [EU] trade strategy."

Non-tariff barriers remain a key issue for Brussels

Citing estimates of a possible 71 percent increase in the EU's exports to Japan if tariff and non-tariff barriers are reduced to their fullest possible extent, the trade committee specifically stressed the difficulty that Tokyo's existing non-tariff barriers have posed to EU businesses attempting to access the Japanese market.

"The key [to successful negotiations that will boost EU GDP] lies in removing non-tariff barriers, particularly in crucial sectors such as cars and medical devices," Kazak said.

Indeed, the EU's ailing automobile industry has been among the most outspoken in its opposition to a Brussels-Tokyo pact, due to concerns that a mishandled FTA would cause a sharp spike in Japanese car imports in the EU without sufficiently reducing obstructions to the 27-country bloc's own exports. A similar effect was seen following the bloc's recent agreement with South Korea.

Along with stressing that non-tariff barriers in the car sector must be addressed in the proposed trade talks, MEPs also called for the lifting of market access barriers in electronics, postal services, and railway public procurement.

Preliminary "scoping exercises" carried out by Japan and the EU earlier this year found both sides already in agreement regarding a series of "roadmaps" for the elimination of non-tariff barriers (See Bridges Weekly, [25 July 2012](#)). In light of industry concerns, de Gucht has made clear he would take "stock of the progress Japan [makes] on dismantling the non-tariff barriers" that have many EU producers worried.

The EU trade chief has promised that negotiations would be stopped "if the implementation has not been satisfactory," a view supported by MEPs during last week's vote.

Next steps

The full European Parliament will next debate and vote on the resolution, which is expected to occur later this month. Though the consent of the European Council would also be required before the trade talks could begin, Parliament has asked that it be allowed to make its decision before the Council moves forward.

ICTSD reporting; "EU, U.S. to negotiate free-trade deal from spring 2013: officials," REUTERS, 17 October 2012.

WORLD TRADE ORGANIZATION

Ukraine Renegotiation Request Fuels Concern Among Trading Partners at WTO Ctte

The controversy over Ukraine's request to renegotiate its tariff schedule continues to brew in Geneva, with nearly 60 countries raising concerns over the "systemic and commercial" implications of such a move at a WTO committee meeting yesterday.

The row stems from a request tabled by Kiev last month to review over 350 tariff lines that were approved in its accession protocol. The proposal, which was sent to delegations in Geneva last month, surprised various other WTO members, particularly given its timing – Ukraine is a relatively recent member of the global trade body, having just joined the now 157-member WTO in 2008 after a nearly 15-year accession process – and the unusual size of the request.

At Tuesday's meeting of the WTO Committee on Market Access, various members, which together encompassed 58 countries and a range of economic interests, complained over Kiev's move, largely reiterating concerns that had been raised at the global trade body's General Council earlier this month. (See Bridges Weekly, [3 October 2012](#))

The group included Canada, the EU on its behalf and for Croatia, the US, Brazil, Guatemala, Chile, Malaysia on its own behalf and that of ASEAN countries, Colombia, Uruguay, Turkey, Argentina, New Zealand, Korea, Japan, El Salvador, Switzerland, Hong Kong, Australia, Norway, Mexico, China, and Ecuador.

No member spoke up in Ukraine's defence, trade sources told Bridges.

A provision in the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) – Article 28 – does indeed allow for the renegotiation of accession terms. Other members have also used the provision in the past to renegotiate small changes in their tariff schedules.

However, some of the members that spoke up on Tuesday argued that Kiev's proposal – given the hundreds of tariff lines involved – extends well beyond the intent and the wording of the GATT provision, echoing similar comments made by EU Ambassador Angelos Pangratis at this month's General Council meeting.

"The EU is of the firm opinion that the procedure set out in Article XXVIII GATT is not meant for renegotiating a significant part of the accession commitments of WTO members," EU Ambassador Pangratis told members earlier this month at the 3 October General Council gathering, in a statement that was backed by several other members.

The move "risks undermining the credibility of members' commitments to their WTO obligations," he said at the time.

Questions over the impact of this move on the multilateral trading system, and complaints over the little information regarding what the exact changes to these tariff lines might be, were also raised during this week's committee meeting.

As in any trade negotiation, members asking to restructure their tariff schedules are also expected to provide something in return. Some of the members speaking at yesterday's committee meeting, however, stressed that what such recompense might be is also unclear.

In its defence, Ukraine argued that the request is not protectionist, but instead is an effort to use a legitimate tool to achieve what it deems as a reasonable trade policy objective. The country, the Ukraine delegate said, took on a very open regime upon joining the Geneva-based trade body, with the expectation that the ongoing Doha Round talks would lead to additional liberalisation among other WTO members with more protected economies.

Given that the liberalisation expected in the long-running Doha Round negotiations has yet to occur, however, following the declaration of a negotiating impasse last year, Ukraine argued that "today's reality [now] makes the adjustment necessary."

Ultimately, all members speaking against the Ukraine proposal at Tuesday's meeting asked that Kiev provide further details and reconsider its request.

ICTSD reporting.

EVENTS & RESOURCES

Events

Coming soon

21-26 October, Nairobi, Kenya. AFRICAN SUSTAINABLE ENERGY FINANCE SUMMER ACADEMY. Held by the Frankfurt School of Finance and Management, this five-day training course on sustainable energy finance aims to provide a comprehensive framework on renewable energy and energy efficiency financing, with a special emphasis on Africa. Topics to be addressed include the economics of renewable energy sources such as solar and wind power; climate change and political negotiations; the potential for renewable and energy efficiency projects on the continent; and financing sources. For more information, visit the Frankfurt School [website](#).

23-25 October, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. EIGHTH AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT FORUM. The eighth African Development Forum (ADF) – convened in collaboration with the African Union Commission (AUC), the African Development Bank (AFDB), and other partners – is

being held under the theme "Governing and Harnessing Natural Resources for Africa's Development." This year's ADF aims to provide a forum for discussing the importance of natural resources in the broader social and economic development processes in Africa. It will focus on mineral, land, timber, and fishery resources and the potential role they can play in fostering growth and structural economic transformation on the continent. More information can be found [here](#).

24 October, Washington, US. PRIVATE SECTOR EXPORT OPPORTUNITIES FOR GREEN BUILDING AND CLEAN TECH. Sponsored by the Northern Virginia-DC US Export Assistance Center, this event will feature a panel of small businesses currently exporting or becoming export ready in the green building and clean tech market. The panel will also address the opportunities in this field. For more information, visit the event [website](#).

24-26 October, Cali, Colombia. AMERICAS COMPETITIVENESS FORUM: INNOVATION FOR PROSPERITY. Organised by the Colombian Ministry of Commerce, Industry and Tourism and the Organization of American States (OAS), the main objective of the ACF is to facilitate commercial development and allow exchange of ideas and knowledge so the countries of the Americas can become more innovative, productive, and competitive, therefore improving the living standards of inhabitants. The event will feature plenary sessions, group discussions, and high level specialised sessions, as well as entrepreneurial meetings and sessions with government authorities. For more information, visit the event [website](#).

WTO Events

An updated list of forthcoming WTO meetings is posted [here](#). Please bear in mind that dates and times of WTO meetings are often changed, and that the WTO does not always announce the important informal meetings of the different bodies. Unless otherwise indicated, all WTO meetings are held at the WTO, Centre William Rappard, rue de Lausanne 154, 1211 Geneva, Switzerland, and are open to WTO Members and accredited observers only.

18-19 October: Committee on Sanitary and Phytosanitary Measures

22 October: Committee on Safeguards

22 October: Working Group on Trade and Transfer of Technology

23 October: Committee on Budget, Finance and Administration

23 October: Committee on Subsidies and Countervailing Measures – Special Meeting followed by Regular Committee

23 October: Dispute Settlement Body

24 October: Committee on Anti-Dumping Practices – Informal Group on Anti-Circumvention followed by the Working Group on Implementation

24 October: Committee on Anti-Dumping Practices

24 October: Committee on Anti-Dumping Practices – Working Group on Implementation followed by the Regular Committee

Other Upcoming Events

29 October – 9 November, online. INTERNATIONAL ENVIRONMENTAL GOVERNANCE. The two week web-based course from the UN Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR) aims to provide participants with comprehensive knowledge of the role of the

main actors involved in the development of international environmental law who formulate policy instruments and negotiate and conclude Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs). The course will point out how this knowledge is necessary to identify the shortcomings of the current environmental governance regime. For more information, visit the UNITAR [website](#).

29-30 October, Turin, Italy. INTER-AGENCY EXPERT MEETING ON ASSESSING OPPORTUNITIES FOR GROWTH AND INCLUSION IN THE GREEN ECONOMY. This International Labour Organization (ILO) event aims to bring together staff from international agencies and country delegates that are undertaking or planning green economy assessments for inclusive policies to increase shared knowledge about the range of approaches and research and operational tools used by international agencies and applied in partner countries. The event also aims to identify options for greater agency collaboration and country application on how the green economy can contribute to achieve economic growth with decent work and social inclusion, as called for in the Rio+20 outcome document. For more information, visit the ILO [website](#).

22-23 February, 2013, Pune, India. INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON TRADE, MARKETS AND SUSTAINABILITY (ICTMS-2013). Organised by the Symbiosis Institute of International Business, this inter-disciplinary conference will seek to understand some of the major opportunities and challenges in different economies, particularly in key priority sectors. The conference will address issues around global trade mechanisms and networks, as well as their linkages to development; emerging market mechanisms that provide transformative solutions – including potential game changers in business and industry – and innovative product development for new markets, including strategies around innovation. Research papers presented at the conference will be presented across four tracks: trade, markets, sustainability, and management issues. More information can be found [here](#).

Resources

DEVELOPING THE SERVICES SECTOR AS ENGINE OF GROWTH FOR ASIA: AN OVERVIEW. By Marcus Noland, Donghyun Park, and Gemma B. Estrada for Peterson Institute for International Economics (October 2012). This paper addresses the maturing of the manufacturing sector in many Asian countries which, combined with the relatively slower progress of Asia's services sector, has made services sector development a top priority for developing Asia. The authors' central objective is to broadly survey and analyse the current landscape of the region's services sector to assess its potential to serve as an engine for inclusive economic growth. The authors find that services are already an important source of output, growth, and jobs in the region, but that Asia's service sector productivity greatly lags behind that of the advanced economies, which implies ample room for further growth. The full text can be found [here](#).

OECD REVIEW OF AGRICULTURAL POLICIES: INDONESIA. Published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2012). This report states that Indonesia can improve national food security by facilitating greater investment in agriculture, opening agri-food markets to greater international trade, reforming input subsidies and food aid schemes, and moving away from self-sufficiency policy objectives. The report contends that promoting sustainable private investment in agriculture is crucial to enhancing the country's agricultural growth, maximising the development benefits of a strong agricultural sector, and achieving food security. It assesses the performance of

Indonesian agriculture over the last two decades, evaluates Indonesian agricultural policy reforms, and provides recommendations to address future challenges, also including a chapter focusing on sustainable investment in agriculture. The full report can be downloaded [here](#).

THE COST TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES OF U.S. CORN ETHANOL EXPANSION. By Timothy A. Wise for the Global Development and Environment Institute (October 2012). This working paper states that the extended and widespread drought in the US corn belt is straining corn supplies, raising prices to record levels. The author points out that the United States is by far the world's largest producer and exporter of corn, and that the combination of tight supplies, low inventories, and continued high demand from the ethanol industry have prompted calls for reforms to the country's biofuel policies. The author estimates the global impacts of US ethanol expansion, as well as the negative impacts on the poor in net corn exporting countries, and ultimately recommends that reforms to US biofuel policy be made. The full text can be found [here](#).

INCORPORATING CLIMATE CHANGE CONSIDERATIONS INTO AGRICULTURAL INVESTMENT PROGRAMS. Published by the UN Food and Agricultural Organization's Investment Centre (2012). This guidance document is intended to help governments and their professional advisors in agricultural and rural development investment operations incorporate climate change considerations in programme identification, design, and supervision. It summarises pertinent information from FAO and external sources, and provides links to further resources. The document also provides guidance on rapid assessments, possible options, and good practices for mitigation, adaptation, and disaster risk reduction. The full document can be found [here](#).

ILLEGAL TRADE IN ENVIRONMENTALLY SENSITIVE GOODS. Published by the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2012). This report provides an overview of the economic and policy issues involved in the illegal trade of environmentally sensitive goods. It examines the impact of this trade, including its economic significance and environmental consequences, and the extent to which customs and licensing-scheme data analysis can be used to assess illegal trade. The report also aims to better understand the role of different broad types of policy instruments in addressing illegal trade in environmentally sensitive goods. The full report can be found [here](#).

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